

Parenting Views

SIBLING SQUABBLE AND THE FOUR S's



March 2003

Young children benefit from your talking out loud about what you are doing when you separate the children or put up the toy for "later" that they are fighting over, etc.

Show Them the Way—Use the squabbles to teach children what to do when people disagree, and how to "fight fairly". Children learn from others how to fight—usually in win-lose positions—it's a whole different thing when "mutual respect" enters a home. (It is important to deal with the behavior calmly, use a quiet voice, and avoid saying things like "I don't like it when you don't share...you're so selfish," or other words that put down a child for who he/she IS rather than not liking what he/she chose to DO.)

The parent might say something like this to have fighting be a win-win situation:

"You are fighting now—you might get hurt (or you have hurt ____). I worry and am very disappointed when children get hurt in their fighting, so I will help you figure out something better to do.

I'm going to...

...give you something else to do now."

...get another truck for you to play with together."

...help you build a ramp so that you can race your car and truck together."

...move you over here for now."

(Do not always move the same child, or move both of them away from the scene.)

...read you both a story now—then you'll feel better. We can try coming back to playing together later or when you both feel better."

When children start talking you could start asking them, "What would you like to do to solve the problem this time?" (Children can't use their words if they don't know what to say!)

When siblings are squabbling, if you have built upon their fighting as a 'teachable moment': the other S's will be easy for you to use:

Scoot—The parent leaves the room where the two children are squabbling.

Scat—(**Send them away**)—The parent/teacher removes all the children from the scene, "You'll need to take your squabble..." ("...outside," or "...out of the kitchen where you'll be safer," or wherever you agree ahead of time with the children that, "It's okay to work it out here.")

When you send the fight out of sight, children generally stop their fighting—or they work it out, and can't wait to let you know how they did it "by themselves!"

Stay—The parent/teacher stays but doesn't get involved; if tempted to get involved, the parent may at any point fall back on *Scoot*, *Scat*, or *Show them the Way*!

Source: Jane Nelsen, Ed.D. & Mary L. Hughes, MHR

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.

James Baldwin



WE NEED SELF CONTROL TOO

We're all worried about the possibility of another terrorist act, going to war, plus an economic downturn. How are we handling all the stresses in our own lives?

The Problem of Road Rage - Having a driver's license does not license us to use our cars as weapons. Drivers everywhere have decided that they are entitled to threaten and punish other drivers. The truth is that all of us have made careless driving errors at one time or another. Our goal should be to drive carefully, defensively and to be tolerant of our fellow drivers. [They are probably just as tired as we are.]

What goes around comes around - In the effort to relieve the pain from past experiences, the impulse to "get even" is great. However, the truth is that aggression only perpetuates more aggression - like passing a hot coal. It is always easier to recognize misbehavior in others. It is far more difficult to exercise self-control.

As adults, we need to remember that through our behavior, we serve as role models for every child in our society.

Source: Dr. Jane Rosen-Grandon,
Family Info. Services 2003

HOW TO HANDLE CHILDREN'S FIGHTING

Level 1: Normal Bickering - Ignore it. Let them work it out.

Level II: Situation Heating Up - Adult intervention might be helpful

1. **Acknowledge their anger.** "You two sound mad at each other!"
2. **Reflect each child's point of view.** "You've already played with this toy but your sister wants a turn too."
3. **Describe the problem with respect.** "That's a tough one: Two children and only one toy."
4. **Express confidence in the children's ability to find their own solution.** "I know you two can figure out what to do."
5. **Leave the room.**

Level III: Situation Possibly Dangerous - Inquire

1. "Is this a play fight or a real fight?"
2. **Let the children know:** "Play fighting by mutual consent only." (If it's not fun for both, it's got to stop.)

Level IV: Situation Definitely Dangerous! - Adult Intervention Necessary.

1. **Describe what you see.** "I see two very angry children who are about to hurt each other."
2. **Separate the children.** "It's not safe to be together. We must have a cooling-off period. Quick, you to your room, and you to yours!"

Source: Siblings Without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too. By Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

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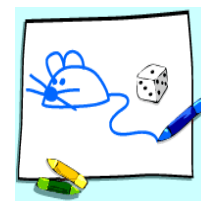
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Source: Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN
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MICE DICE—LEARN TO TAKE TURNS & PLAY FAIRLY

You will need

- A die
- Paper
- Pencils or pens



Take turns to throw the die and draw a simple mouse. You must first throw a 6 to draw the body of the mouse. You can then add the other features as you throw the different numbers. If you throw the same number twice you must miss a turn. The first person to draw a complete mouse shouts out **“There’s a mouse in my house!”** and is the winner!

- 6=body (a simple semi-circle)
- 5=whiskers (2 straight lines at each side of where the nose will go)
- 4=nose (a little circle at the opposite end of the semi-circle to the tail)
- 3=ears (an ‘m’ shape over where the eyes will go)
- 2=eyes (2 dots or small circles)
- 1=tail (wiggly line at one end of semi circle)

You may like to try this game with more people and see who can be the first person to make three mice. You could also time the game and see how many mice you can make in 5 minutes.

Source: www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies

CAR SEAT STRUGGLES

A Parent Writes: I am furious with my son. He won’t get buckled into his car seat. He arches his back, squirms, kicks at me and tries to get unbuckled.

Solution: Think of Change, Activity and Resistance. **C.A.R.**



Change: Car travel means changing from one experience to a different one. Children need extra help with transitions. Do not tell him what is going to happen, what he has to do and how to do it ask him questions. After greeting one another, ask him what happens when you arrive each evening. Maybe he will complain that he doesn’t want to leave yet. Acknowledge that he enjoys playing at school and would like to stay longer, then continue. *“When we go outside, what do we do?” “We get in our car.”* Ask him what happens when he gets into the car. Eventually, he will identify that he needs to get into his car seat and get buckled up. Talk through the whole event and help him picture it, step by step. This eliminates 75 to 80 percent of battles and takes only a couple of minutes. Compare spending five minutes preparing for the transition versus a half-hour or more listening to him howl. Some of the most positive discipline is preventative discipline.

Activity: Alert! Car seat! Long confinement ahead! Is your child physically ready to sit still? Consider playing a game in which we ‘leave all our wiggles’ inside before heading for the car. Bear in mind other physical needs. Share a cup of milk, water or juice before leaving. Always trot to the bathroom for a last minute potty stop before any outing. A small bag of fruit, raisins, juice packets or leftovers from your lunch might save the day.

Resistance: You want him to sit still and buckle up and he is busy proving that you can’t make him do it. Even if you overpower him he will learn how to unbuckle himself. Decide what you will do. Explain your decision to him. For example, you have decided that if he fails to cooperate, you will read a book until he tells you he is ready to get buckled in. The first time or two he needs to check it out and see if you really mean what you say. When he begins to struggle—you don’t. Open your book and read. Say nothing. Even if this takes ten or fifteen minutes it beats listening to his howls during the entire trip. He will soon tell you he is ready to buckle up. Fighting alone is boring and power struggles do not work with only one participant. When he says he is ready, help him buckle up, turn the key and head for the road.

Source: Roslyn Duffy for Family Information Services, 2003



APPLE BREAD

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- Vegetable spray or oil.

EQUIPMENT:

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Mixing bowl
- Cutting board
- Large bowl
- Stirring spoon
- Loaf pan
- Fork (to beat eggs)

Directions:

1. Mix flour, baking soda, baking powder & cinnamon together in the mixing bowl. Set aside.
2. Peel & chop apples.
3. Beat eggs in large bowl, add sugar and oil to the eggs. Mix with the stirring spoon until smooth.
4. Add the dry ingredients and apples to the egg mixture.
5. Add applesauce and mix all ingredients until blended.
6. Pour batter into lightly oiled loaf pan. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Source: Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program, MSUE